

## How Much is Too Much to Pay for a Hobo Nickel?

By Carol Bastable RM576



Many people may have been wondering this very question just after the 2013 OHNS hobo nickel auction. Previous to this event, I do not think anyone could have even pondered a hobo nickel selling for nearly \$25,000.

Just five to ten years ago, a thousand was even a lot for a hobo nickel. Last year's Bert going for nearly \$14,000 was a shock and this year....oh my! Good original hobo nickels have been on an upward trend while modern ones have flip-flopped with both low and high prices.

Our country is floundering in a recession but that is hard to see when analyzing hobo nickel prices. While people at the auction were shaking hands with the "Dicer" buyer, his father was shaking his head at what his son spent. Once the purchase made front page news, his father came around and saw the value and importance of his purchase. If for nothing else, it was great advertising for a coin dealer's business.

But, what is the coin's real value? Most people will say an item is worth what a willing buyer will pay and a seller will accept. At auction, one bid increment is all that separates one buyer from another willing buyer. With only one bid apart, how much can a person really overpay anyway?

To understand value, one need only turn an eye to collector coin prices. In the Numismatic arena, a major hurdle was jumped when a 1913 Liberty nickel broke the one million dollar mark in 1996. Prior to that event, there was a glass ceiling and no coin could break through it. Previously at auctions there would be excitement and expectation as people thought to themselves, is this the coin that will bring (or even top) a million?

The 1913 Liberty nickel is one of five known examples. It was a date that was not even supposed to have been struck. That year was the start of the Buffalo nickel series and Liberty nickels had ended in 1912. Well...they were supposed to have ended.

Just over ten years after the historic million dollar auction, a choice 1913 Liberty nickel sold for five million. Now five years later, the same coin could top five million if it went to auction. If that sounds like a lot then hang on because a rare 1794 silver dollar just topped the ten million dollar mark this last January. That's right, numismatic history for both U.S. coin and hobo nickel collectors all in the same month.

So, the question boils down to: If a coin which is one of five can be worth millions, how much is a coin that is one of one known examples worth? There are far more collectors for government issue coins than for tokens and medals, so that brings down the price significantly. But, when you look at rarity factors, maybe this hobo nickel was a bargain. Only the buyer in this case knows how much more he was willing to pay for this exceptional hobo nickel.

Bo has always been the most recognizable and popular carver for classic collectors. Dealers get excited when they buy some old hobo nickels and clamor to find out if they scored a Bo. The reverse carved "Dicer" coin is a fabulously unique coin with its boxcar and band of hoboes. Being a plate coin (one pictured in a numismatic book) is also a plus as it is a widely known image.

Hobo nickel collectors are lucky that they can own scarce and rare coins at a fraction of what other coin collectors have to pay for similarly rare coins. Also, if hobo nickel collectors ever want to exhibit their collections, they have a leg up in the rarity category on the judges scoring sheets. Rarity and cost are skewed in favor of the hobo nickel collector as price/rarity is a barrier for traditional coin collectors.

In the coming years, it will be interesting to see where these prices go from here and watch as previous record prices might be broken again. What is the hobo nickel glass ceiling.... \$25,000.... \$50,000? It will probably be some time before "Dicer's" proud owner will want to part with this one and it is hard to imagine another having the appeal and demand this one had. One never knows though because an even better one might be sitting at the bottom of some unknowing person's junk drawer. ♦

## **BoTales Banner Banter and Editor's Remarks**



Before I talk about the hobo nickels on the cover banner, I need to talk about the color or rather the lack of it in this issue. In the spring issue I told you the board had decided we could afford to possibly do our issues in color. As you know, the spring issue was nearly 100% in color. But the cost for color was much higher than anticipated and is unsustainable on a yearly basis. So we need to scale back for a while. We will have some color in future issues. I'm working with a new printer and I am optimistic that we can achieve favorable pricing. Our goal is to provide value to our membership and not have to raise dues costs. I am using that new printer for this issue. I'm also using heavy weight gloss text paper for the cover (rather than cover stock) and a different mailing packaging method to cut down on costs. Let me know what you think? Feedback is always welcome. We have had to increase dues cost for our Canadian members and life memberships for all who reside outside the U.S. We have had to also increase QD fees for submission of a single coin (see page 4 and article on page 10).

Let's now look at the cover banner. It has again been created by Chris Dempsey who I want to thank for his very fine effort. We have again featured four hobo nickels in the banner, two classic carvings and two contemporary renderings. From left to right we see a cameo portrait by contemporary artist Steve Cox of the poet Walt Whitman. It sold on eBay for \$255. Next to Steve's superior carving is a classic hobo nickel with its simple punched design. It sold on eBay for \$46. The amazing motor car rendering in bas-relief finish was done by Alex Ostrogradsky and recently sold on eBay for \$393. On the right side of the banner is a beautiful superiorly carved classic nickel which recently sold on eBay for \$439

I want to remind you that *BoTales* is not mine but your (OHNS member) publication. Articles and hobo related material are always welcome. Don't worry about formatting or polished grammar. I'm happy to edit your submissions.

In this issue we are nicknaming nine classic hobo nickel carvers. In the fall 2013 issue, we may be nicknaming as many as three times that amount. We suddenly have a major backlog of proposed nicknames. The "Three's A Match" feature has in part facilitated this. We talked this over with several board members and feel we need to get these new nicknamed carvers into print and out to our membership. After doing these, we hope to create a pamphlet including all the classic known and nicknamed carvers to be made available at a modest cost to our members.

Also, a big thanks to Marc Banks for helping with the proofreading for this issue.

### **BoTales Publishing Schedule**

<b><u>Issue</u></b>	<b><u>Deadline for Submission</u></b>	<b><u>Publishing Date</u></b>
Vol. 22, No. 3	Aug. 1, 2013	Aug. 15, 2013
Vol. 22, No. 4	Nov. 1, 2013	Nov. 15, 2013
Vol. 23, No. 1	Feb. 1, 2014	Feb. 15, 2014
Vol. 23, No. 2	May 1, 2014	May 15, 2014

This schedule is dependent on the timely submission of articles and pictures for each issue. Please submit your articles as soon as you can and as often as you would like so I have them to publish. If a deadline has past or it is the Auction Catalog issue coming up, your story will be used in a later future issue. Send your material to **OHNS Editor Ralph Winter** (See page 3 for contact info.).

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## OHNS Hobo Tokens

**2013** OHNS tokens are currently available for purchase by OHNS members. The price is \$27.50 per set (copper and silver) or \$20 for the silver and \$15 for the copper plus postage of \$1.50.



2010-2012 OHNS tokens are also currently available for purchase by OHNS members. The price is \$27.50 per set (copper and silver) or \$20 for the silver and \$15 for the copper plus postage of \$1.50.



**Please submit your order to: Don Haley**  
**5929 Wedgewood Village Circle, Lake Worth,**  
**Florida 33463-7368.** Checks are to be made out to the  
*Original Hobo Nickel Society (complete name).* Don's  
email address is **DonLHaley@aol.com.**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> printing Guidebooks are available at \$28 postage paid and "The Hobo Nickel" slide show DVD/CD ROM is available for \$10. Old issues of *BoTales* are also available for purchase. Contact Don for details on any of these items. Don is currently out of pin-back buttons. We will announce when these are again available for sale. ♦

THE  
**Original HOBO Nickel Society**  
MEMBERSHIP AND QUALITY DESIGNATION SERVICES

Quality  
Designation

<b>Contact Information</b> - OHNS # _____		<b>Membership</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> QD Fee (Single Coin) - \$20 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 10 coins - \$15 per coin <input type="checkbox"/> Bulk QD (11+ coins) - \$12.50 per coin <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Members - \$25 per coin  <b><i>*Upon QD Completion*</i></b> <input type="checkbox"/> Return Coins to Me <input type="checkbox"/> Consign to Next Annual OHNS Auction  <b><u>Fees include postage and \$100 per coin insurance</u></b>
Name: _____ Address: _____  City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____ Hobo Monicker: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year (U.S.) - \$15 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Years (U.S.) - \$42 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Years (U.S.) - \$65 <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Life Member - \$250 <input type="checkbox"/> LM (Outside U.S.) - \$300 <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (under 19) - \$7.50 <input type="checkbox"/> Associate _____ - (Shared Mail) - \$7.50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year (Canada) - \$25 <input type="checkbox"/> Outside U.S./Canada - \$30		<b>Submission No. _____ of _____</b>

## Quality Designation Coin List

	Coin Date	Carver (If Known)	Value
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

	Coin Date	Carver (If Known)	Value
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

**Declared Value Total:**

Submissions will be reviewed by two OHNS QD Examiners who will give independent opinions as to the quality of the carving, subject, and probable artist. A photograph of the coin will be taken to accompany the report. Originals of the report and photograph will be returned along with the coin to the owner and copies will be kept (1) by the first OHNS QD Examiner and (2) in the OHNS Archives. Please mail coin(s), paperwork, and payment to OHNS Examiner Marc Banks.

For additional insurance and/or registered mail, please enclose an addition \$5 per coin, per each additional \$500 of insurance (or fraction thereof, up to a maximum of \$25 for all coins submitted). If registered mail is desired on a single coin submission, please include an additional \$40.

The opinions rendered by our Quality Designation Examiners are strictly that, and are not a guarantee of value or authenticity. It is, however, the best considered judgement by qualified specialists in the field. Others may reach **DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS**.

- I (grant) (do not grant) authority for photographs of my submissions to be used by the OHNS for publicity, education, research, or any other endeavor. (Circle one)

**- I agree to abide by the Original Hobo Nickel Society Code of Ethics.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

New Membership/Renewal	Quality Designation Coin Fees	Already Got QD papers? Don't pay twice!
<p>Please mail new member/renewal dues and a copy of this completed form to:</p> <p><b>OHNS Membership</b>  <b>Becky Jirka</b>  <b>5111 Illinois Avenue</b>  <b>Lisle, IL 60532-2015</b></p>	<p>No. of Coins _____ X fee _____ = _____</p> <p>Additional Insurance: _____</p> <p>QD Form Fee Total: _____</p> <p>Mail Fees and completed QD form to:</p> <p><b>Marc Banks (OHNS QD)</b>  <b>P.O. Box 5</b>  <b>Avon, CT 06001-0005</b></p>	<p>Coins with original QD Papers being consigned to the OHNS auction do not need to be re-evaluated. To consign those coins, please send the coin(s) and QD paperwork to:</p> <p><b>Steve Alpert</b>  <b>P.O. Box 335441</b>  <b>North Las Vegas, NV 89033-5441</b></p>

**\*\*Please make all checks payable to *The Original Hobo Nickel Society*. Bank Requires Name to be written out in full!\*\***

Code of Ethics, Bylaws, Products, Officer Information, and Additional Membership/QD Forms can be found at

[www.hobonickels.org](http://www.hobonickels.org)



## President's Message

It is great to look back at January FUN show and think of the firsts that happened, now the best part>>>>> The future

**July Fun is the continuation of the January Show.** Hobo Nickels will be on the marque, our table will be the destination table for the summer show.

Our HOBO table will be set up again with working carvers, streaming thru the world for our foreign members that want to see what is goin on...Our members carving on the LINDSAY AIRGRAVERS..... Cameras will be set up for all to watch. Any new carver that wishes to learn how to do this will be shown the basics.

One thing we all need to think about is the Auction for January 2014, Send your coins in for early spots in the Auction Catalog.

If anyone would like to run for Board of Directors of OHNS please contact our Secretary or a member of the nominating committee (Stephen Alpert, Ralph Winter or Art DelFavero) with your intentions. Requirements can be found on page 10 this issue.

Look forward to seeing all that can make it to Orlando in July.

Thanks for all the boards help in making this year a great year for HOBO NICKELS.

*Rolfie*



## Nickel Carvers, There's Still Time

It's only midway through 2013. There's still plenty of time to carve a centennial hobo nickel commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indian head or Buffalo nickel and 100 years of carving hobo nickels. The design can be whatever you choose, but it should have something like "100 YEARS" and "TO 2013" somewhere on the nickel. (see page ?? this issue to see what Shane Hunter did). It also would be best if your design is carved on a 1913 Buffalo nickel but that's not necessary. After carving the nickel, you need to photograph both sides and submit the photos to the *BoTales* editor (see page 3 for contact info). You may also send it to Marc Banks to photograph if you prefer. Along with the pictures of the nickel, also submit a short bio and photograph of yourself. Then, we will publish the pictures of your nickel along with your bio and photograph in a future *BoTales* issue so our members can get to know you better. The nickel pictures and bios will be published throughout 2013 and 2014 if necessary as they come in to the editor. So do now before the end of 2013. ♦

## New Address for QD Submissions

Please note there is new address for QD Submissions. See Membership/QD Form on page 4. Also note change in cost for submitting a single coin. ♦

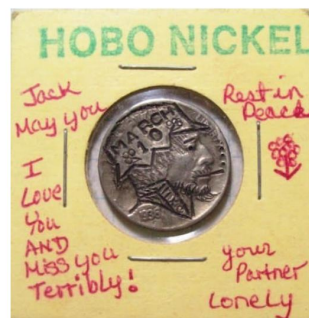
## It **DOES NOT** Get Forwarded

*BoTales* is mailed out via USPS Standard Mail (using a permit). Unlike First Class, this type of mail is not forwarded if the addressee has moved. So if you move without notifying OHNS, you may not receive your *BoTales* issues.

On page 2 of this and most *BoTales* issues you will find a "*BoTales* Publishing Schedule." If you are moving, you need to notify our Secretary Becky Jirka **prior to** the next issue publishing date. Some of you are "Snowbirds," living at one address in the winter and somewhere else during the remainder of the year. It is critical that you notify Becky each time you change addresses.

Becky's contact information is found on page 3 of this issue. Email or written notification is acceptable. ♦

## Tribute Hobo Nickel Sold



A hobo nickel, that the late Jackie Allen carved after the passing of Jack Press, recently sold on eBay. Note the date "MARCH 10" on the hat. Nickel carver Jack Press caught the westbound on March 10, 1983. ♦

## Early Works of Nicknamed Carvers

By Marc Banks, RM538

Any one with even a passing interest in hobo nickels has to admire the talent of the many unknown carvers who crafted these little pieces of folk art. It is clear that not all of these carvers possessed the same degree of talent. Their skills varied as did the imaginative designs they created. Even the best carvers had to learn the craft and their abilities and styles evolved after endless repetition. While some of the variability seen amongst the works of individual carvers can be attributed to their whims (see *BoTales* Fall 2011 articles by Ralph Winter and the late Verne Walrafen, pictures below), other differences are part of this learning process. Early on hobo nickel aficionados began to recognize the works of particular carvers and in 1995 The Original Hobo Nickel Society initiated the practice of nicknaming the unknown carvers of specimens with enough characteristics to indicate that they were the work of the same artist. Today, there are over seventy nicknamed carvers and the number continues to grow as more and more hobo nickels surface. In this article, I will provide examples of what are almost certainly the early works of some of the better known nicknamed carvers.



Different "Bushy Beard" characters

I will begin with a hobo nickel I purchased at the 2012 FUN Show in Orlando (#1 below). When shown the carving, I immediately recognized a strong resemblance to carvings by an unknown classic carver nicknamed "Peanut Ear" (#4 below). The carver was so named by Bill Fivaz and the late Dave Wilson after the peanut-shaped ears on his works. Other diagnostics for "Peanut Ear" are: a distinctive hat and hat band, often with a notch in the top of the hat; a punched beard and moustache; a V-shaped collar; an enlarged nostril; an unaltered profile; and a thin -line extension of hair from the ear to the forehead just below the hat brim. His carvings are generally done on 1913 buffalo nickels. The one I bought at FUN is a less refined example than the typical "Peanut Ear" and lacks the characteristic ear, but possesses most of the major diagnostic markers. The coin was examined by several of the OHNS graders and a number of knowledgeable collectors and all came to the conclusion that it was most likely one of the artist's earlier, less skillful works done before he perfected his craft and his trade mark ear. Two other specimens shown below show a progression in "Peanut Ear's" carving skill (#3 & #4 & #5 below). As with many other endeavors "practice makes perfect".



Evolution in "Peanut Ear" carvings with full and Amish style beards

As noted above examples of early carvings by other nicknamed carvers have also appeared on the market. Early and late examples of two varieties of carvings by "Tufty" demonstrate the improvements and changes over time (see below). Most obvious are changes to the ear on both varieties and the presence of the Indian's braid albeit punched over and the absence of the tuft of hair on the forehead on the early straw hat specimen.



Early and late works of Tufty: Domed hat and straw hat varieties.

Continued on next page



Early Works of Nicknamed Carvers continued from previous page

“Big Ear” is another carver whose work evolved during his carving career and who varied the appearance of his characters. An early example by this carver that I call “Little Big Ear” (on left below) appears to have been carved prior to the artist perfecting his signature Big Ear. The carving possesses other diagnostic markers of “Big Ear”. The transition in carvings by classic carver “No Neck” (below) are quite dramatic. Early works of some other nicknamed carvers are shown at the end of this article.



Carvings by “Big Ear”: early (left) and later short beard and pointed beard.



Carvings by “No Neck”: early to late.

These carvings show that even the better carvers had to learn the craft. With a little searching other early works of nicknamed carvers can be found. As you look for matches, don’t expect carvings by any carver to be identical, each was done by hand and there will be differences. Take a few minutes every now and then and study the characteristics of the different carvers. Each carver has a number diagnostic markers that will help you identify their works. These early carvings can be a good way to acquire an example by a nicknamed carver for a bargain price. ♦



Early and later carvings by “Braidy”



Early and later carvings by “Beady Eye”

and

early and later carving by “Flat Nose”



Evolution of “Pencil Neck’s” carvings

## Micro-Men

By Carol Bastable RM576

In the last issue of *BoTales*, many learned about mini-men or little men hobo nickels. They are carvings of men from head to toe, although a few carvers may opt to end the mini-man at the thigh. Historically, there is another term for some of these carvings and that is *bindlestiff*. This term is specific for a hobo carrying a bindle. The bindle is the stick with an attached sack of belongings. Not all mini-men have bindles, some have walking sticks, some have sacks slung across their backs much like Santa Claus, and still others may not carry anything at all. A term or classification was needed for the broader group.



*"Hunchback" sold in 2013 OHNS auction*



*Famous plate coin carving by Bo, "Dicer"*

For classic hobo nickel collectors, there are only a few known artists that carved miniature men. Currently recognized hobo nickels for mini-men are "V" Neck, Hunchback, Long Coat, Twofer, and Sharp Ear. The hobo nickel "Dicer" that sold in the FUN 2013 auction for a

record \$24,200 could be considered mini-men, but there is an even better term that was also coined at the FUN 2013 show. In the *Hobo Nickels With Mini-Men* exhibit, there was reference to "Micro-Men". The three men in "Dicer" can also be described as micro-men.

"Micro-men" is both a subcategory of mini-men and can also stand on its own as a category unto itself. With many modern carvers using microscopes, the detail is phenomenal and as a result many subjects have been reduced further in size. To be a micro-man, the little person must be a component of a bigger picture. Generally the design can stand on its own with the removal of the person as he is just an adjunct whereas the mini-man is the primary object. He should be no larger than a tenth of the size of the coin and can be far smaller.

There were several micro-men shown in the exhibit at FUN. One was by a well-known miniature artist, Robert Shamey. He is perhaps best known for carving a toothpick into a train. Works like that got him noticed in circles outside of the hobo nickel hobby. His miniature train theme has also appeared on the rim of coin.



*Micro-man on frog by Shamey*

In the FUN exhibit, Shamey's work was displayed throughout the three cases. The last case had a micro-man riding a leaping frog. It was a special commission, but was not the first along these lines. Shamey has carved tiny men riding fish, a grasshopper, and recently a humming bird.

Another coin exhibited at FUN was a micro-man by Alan Chernomashentsev. The carving is in low relief and relies much on engraved techniques. The man is seated inside a boxcar with an open door. The train car is lined with paneling from top to bottom and the planks taper as they get closer to the horizon line. It is daylight outside and the sun beams down on a miniature landscape.





*Hobo Nickel by Alan Chernomashentsev*

The third and last micro man in the exhibit was by Elmer Villarin. The coin is equestrian themed with a man on horseback jumping an elaborate fence. The carving shows a great sense of motion from the horse's leap to the windswept movement of the clothing.



*Equestrian themed Hobo nickel by Elmer Villarin*



*Shane Hunter carving of micro-man in boxcar*

Another hobo nickel carver, Shane Hunter, has also begun to miniaturize his designs. Over the course of several months, Hunter has started adding amazing detail

with brick patterns, wood paneling, railroad ties, and small lettering around the boarder. With this added detail, some of his little men have become smaller and smaller.



*Shane Hunter carving with man & locomotive*

Over the last few years, Ron Landis has begun carving coins that warrant another term to be added to the quality designation forms. His painstaking microscopic carvings of late should be called Stupendous, rather than be grouped in with the "mere" Superior carvings. In the recent OHNS auction, Landis supplied bidders with another fantastic carving of micro-men and a boxcar. All totaled, Landis fit seven men into the design and believe it or not, there was even room for more if he wanted.



*Landis coin from 2013 OHNS auction*

The skill level involved in making these coins is amazing. Many equal or even surpass the best classic cameo hobo nickels. However, remember that most are made by trained artists and professional engravers verses itinerant laborers. Also, the modern age has provided all sorts of fancy equipment to aid in these works of art, such as air powered gravers, microscopes, and at the very least, jeweler's visors. Through creativity, ingenuity, and technology, today's collector has some magnificent selections to choose from. ♦

## Call for Nominations

Per Article VI of the OHNS Bylaws, this is first call for nomination of officers for election at the OHNS Annual Meeting to be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida on Saturday, January 11, 2014.

Candidates may be nominated from the membership at large. **Each must be endorsed by at least three members in good standing with a copy of said nomination, written consent of the nominee and a brief biography of the nominee to be delivered to the secretary three months prior to the annual meeting.** All nominees must have their current year's dues paid in full. No person who is a candidate for president or vice president shall be a candidate for any other office. Endorsements and biographies may be written or sent via email. **Note:** *Any nomination or endorsement letters sent to our former Secretary Verne Walrafen are no longer valid.*

The proposed slate of officers and board members will be published in the Fall 2013 issue of *BoTales* (Volume 22, Issue #3).

Elected officers are president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. Other positions are appointed by the President. All officers and board members are eligible for reelection or nomination to other positions as long as they are members in good standing.

Contact information for the Secretary can be found on page 3 on this issue of *BoTales*. The OHNS Bylaws are available on the OHNS website. ♦

## Change in Dues for Canadian & Lifetime Members

We have recently experienced significantly increased postage costs for mailing *BoTales* to our members in Canada. It is now approximately five (5) times the cost to mail our magazine to members in the U.S. although not as high as mailing the magazine to Europe and other overseas destinations. Our current dues do not cover all the costs of printing, stuffing and mailing *BoTales* and, like other hobby clubs, are cross subsidized by other sales and activities we sponsor. We cannot continue to subsidize the increasing postage costs with our current budget.

Since we increased dues for members in Europe and other overseas destinations to cover the increased postage costs for *BoTales* postage, we had to re-evaluate our dues structure for our members in Canada. After that evaluation a motion was presented to our board to increase the dues of members in Canada from the current \$15 a year to \$25 to cover the increase in postage costs for mailing *BoTales* to their location. The board voted by email to increase the

dues for our members in Canada from \$15 to \$25 per year. Life membership for Canadian and overseas members was increased from \$250/year to \$300/year for the same reason. The increase is effective with the publication of this issue of *BoTales*. This information was previously posted to the OHNS website. ♦

Thanks,  
Sandy Pearl, Treasurer

## ANA Summer Seminar Scholarship

It's not too early to send in your application letter for an OHNS Scholarship to one of the 2014 American Numismatic Association (ANA) Summer Seminar sessions in Colorado Springs. To do so, you need to have been an OHNS member for at least three years and not be in arrears on dues. Additionally, you need to submit in writing (not email) a short essay (approximately 150 words) on why you should receive a scholarship and what course you would be interested in taking. 2013 offerings can be found at the ANA website: [www.money.org](http://www.money.org).

In addition to the essay, you need to include your name, age (if less 18 or less), mailing address, phone number, and, if you have one, your email address. Please also provide both your ANA (if applicable) and OHNS member numbers. Please mail to **Bill Fivaz, PO Box 888660, Atlanta, GA 30356-0660**. Applications must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2012.

After the net proceeds from the annual OHNS FUN Show Auction are made available, the board will determine the number of scholarships and notify the winners. The scholarship will pay for the tuition, room, and meals at Colorado College, and possibly some extra for travel expenses.

**Please understand that being fully qualified and having successfully applied does not guarantee that you will be awarded a scholarship.**

Finally, if you win a scholarship, ANA requires that you be an ANA member to attend the seminar. ANA dues are \$28 a year with online delivery of *The Numismatist* or \$46 a year with monthly mail delivery of the magazine. See [www.money.org](http://www.money.org) for details. ♦

## Cummings Catches the Westbound



We recently learned that OHNS member Colin Cummings (RM1200) passed away at age 69 on August 2, 2012 after a long, brave battle with cancer. Survivors include his wife Therese, two daughters and three grandchildren. Colin was an Eagle Scout and later, mentored young scouts. Colin also was a Third Degree Mason and a Shriner.



## Get Your Auction Lots Submitted

The deadline for submitting coins for the 2014 OHNS FUN Convention Auction is October 15, 2013. ***Don't wait until the last minute.*** The auction will again be limited to about 130 lots. Late submissions may be returned if the auction fills up before the deadline. Please note the guidelines and rules listed below. If you have any additional questions, please contact the auction manager, Stephen Alpert (see page 3 for contact information).

**Submitting Auction Lots •** OHNS members can submit lots for the auction through the mail as detailed on the submission form found on page 4 of this issue.

**Submission Constraints •** Non-carver members may submit no more than one lot from any given modern carver. If a member submits more than one lot by the same modern carver without prior permission from the Auction Manager, the extra coin(s) will be returned at the submitter's expense. There is a **limit of 20 lots total per consigner** allowed. Donated lots are exempt from this rule of just one lot per modern carver.

**Quality Designation Paperwork •** Completed QD paperwork (or the old OHNS Registration paperwork) must accompany each submitted carving. If the QD paperwork is needed fill out a QD Submission Form for each carving... photocopies are OK. The QD submission form can be found on page 4 of this issue or online at <http://www.hobonickels.org/membership.html>. Then mail the carving(s), QD submission form(s) and payment to **Marc Banks**. Be sure to include the extra payment for carvings valued at over \$100 each.

**Auction Fees •** The QD fee is \$20 for one carving; \$15 per carving for 2-10 carvings; 11 or more carvings @ \$12.50 ea. There is a 5% Seller's fee and a 10% Buyer's fee. No QDs are required for bulk lots of 2 or more coins.

**Classic Nickel Carvings •** Old hobo nickels should be of Average or higher quality to be listed individually; lower quality specimens can be sold in quantity as a single bulk lot.

**Recent Nickel Carvings •** Modern hobo nickels should be of Above Average or higher quality to be listed individually; lower quality specimens can be grouped into bulk lots as above.

**Donated Carvings •** We are aiming for an equal balance of old and modern hobo nickels in each auction. Thus modern carvings are limited to three of their own carvings from a carver member (no limit on donated carvings – there are no fees on donated carvings but please fill out a QD submission form and submit one with each donated carving.)

**Minimum Bids •** No minimum or reserve bids can be placed on consigned lots; but the consignor can submit a mailed, faxed, or phoned bid on their item(s) to protect

them (no bids are permitted from the consignor at the auction on their material.)

**Exceptions to Rules •** The OHNS Auction Manager has the authority to make exceptions to the auction rules if it is judged that doing so will be beneficial to the auction.

Again, if you have any questions about these rules, please contact the Auction Manager Stephen Alpert. Contact information can be found on page 3. ♦

## Flips and Please, No Staples

When submitting coins for Quality Designation, it is greatly appreciated if your hobo nickels are housed in plastic “flips” rather than in 2x2 cardboard holders or hard plastic coin holders. **PLEASE, NO STAPLES, even in flips!**

Also, if you are submitting a specimen that you believe to be by a nicknamed carver or a known contemporary carver, it will save time and effort for the QD Examiner if you provide that information along with your submission. OHNS is a volunteer organization. Our QD Examiners give of their time to support the hobby and OHNS. Quality Designation form can be found on page 4 of this *BoTales* issue. ♦

## My Down Under Hobo

By Ralph Winter, LM37

In the spring *BoTales* issue, OHNS member Joe Goode brought to my attention a 1995 \$1 coin issued by Australia honoring Banjo Patterson and his famous song “Waltzing Matilda.” The reverse pictured a swagman, the Australian equivalent of our American hobo. On the obverse was a portrait of Queen Elizabeth.

When I saw this and wrote about it in *BoTales*, I thought that \$1 coin, about the size of an U.S. quarter, would make a fine canvas for a “hobo nickel.” So I went to eBay and purchased one.

When I recently visited Shane Hunter (see page 32), I took my “Waltzing Matilda” coin along. I told Shane an American hobo in place of the queen would make it fun piece to own. Shane agreed and the result is pictured below. Shane left the swagman side intact and signed the coin on the edge. Thanks again to Joe and Shane. ♦





**Editor's Note:** The following articles originally appeared in the March 25, 1981 issue of *COIN WORLD*. These articles appeared prior to the publication of the book *Hobo Nickels* by Delma (Del) Romines, OHNS LM1 in June of 1982. I apologize in advance for the poor quality of some of the photos. They were scanned from two 32 year old faded and discolored newsprint copies. These articles are reproduced here with the permission of *COIN WORLD*. I also want to thank Milana (now going by Mim) Bizic, OHNS LM62 for some additional photos she has provided.

## ***Fourth graders spur Romines into Action***

By Mimi Bizic

Ever stop to wonder what it's like to be a winner on one of those quiz-give-away shows on television? Well, my fourth grade students and I have never been to any filming studios in New York or California, but we're still shaking our heads in disbelief over our recent good fortune in meeting Delma Romines of Louisville, Kentucky.

Del Romines had recently published an article on Hobo nickels in *Coin World* (see *BoTales Volume 21, Issue No. 2, summer 2012*). Since we had just completed a two-month long numismatic unit, culminating in the issue of a wooden nickel, I thought the children would enjoy the story of "Bo," the Hobo. They found the article just as fascinating as I, and wanted to know more about "Bo" and some of those Hobo nickels of his.

Many phone calls later, I related to Mr. Romines all of the enthusiasm we shared for his wonderful article. I then sent him a wooden nickel, and the class's second publishing endeavor, appropriately called "The Second Quarter" since most of the paper dealt with our numismatic unit, complete with songs and plays about money.

"The Price Is Right," Bob Barker Romines must have thought, because not only did the hobo nickels I ordered arrive, but much more personal information about "Bo," and letter after letter stating how he (Mr. Romines) was contacting various leaders in the numismatic field to help us learn more about coin collecting. What was that winning price the children named that spurred Mr. Romines into action? The children's enthusiasm, knowledge, and thirst for more knowledge, and the fact that they called themselves "The Class of Champions."

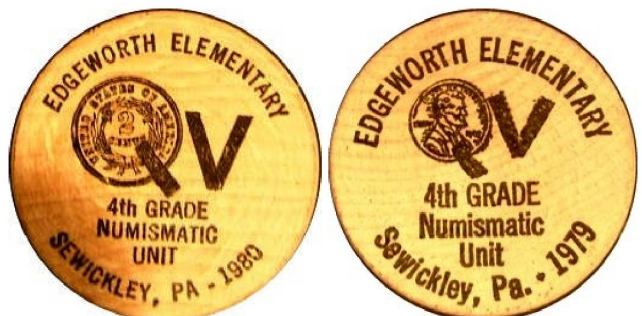
"That's Incredible" you say? That's what the children's response was too, to all of the incredible events that took place soon thereafter. (In fact, one girl wrote to that T.V. show to tell them of our incredible good fortune.)

That "Wheel of Fortune" included a trip from Kentucky by Mr. Romines to our class on Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. The children couldn't believe that Mr. Romines and his good friend, Johnnie Emmett, of Frederick, Maryland., had traveled 450 miles in a snow blizzard that almost closed the school the next day just to speak with them!



Mimi Bizic, fourth grade teacher and numismatist, holds 1943/2 Jefferson nickel, while student Adam Zahorchak poses with a \$10 note error. Numismatists John Emmett and Del Romines spoke to the class in February.

Mr. Romines addressed the "Champions," and told them his talk would include collecting error and variety coins because champions become champions when they tackle tough things and win. In his eyes, the really tough ones in coin collecting are in the variety and error field. Most errorists, he said, look for the known varieties, but the true champion is an explorer, like Columbus, and searches for the unknown.



The fourth grade class at Edgeworth Elementary, Sewickley, Pa., has produced several wooden nickels. The woods share a common Indian Head obverse.

Mr. Romines stated that he started collecting errors and varieties when he was around the class's age (9-11),

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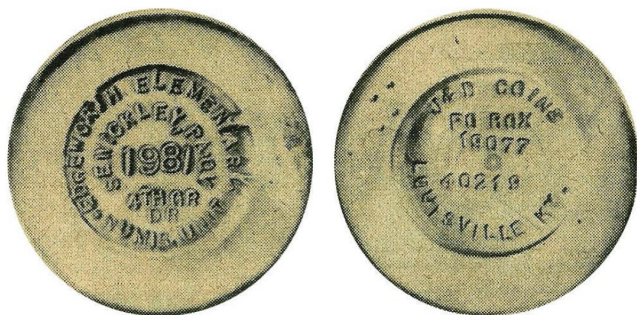


*Fourth graders spur Romines ... continued from page 12*

and by the time he was 12, he had already discovered more than most collectors do in a lifetime. The difference between errors and varieties he explained thusly: "All errors are varieties. But not all varieties are errors. Another way of saying it is all Pennsylvanians are Americans, but not all Americans are Pennsylvanians."

Throughout his presentation you could hear a pin drop, as all eyes and ears focused on everything Mr. Romines said and did. What a "Match Game" there was between Gene Rayburn Romines and my class. It was evident that each "side" had won the heart and love of the other.

And then suddenly it was "Tic Tac Dough" time. Mr. Romines, in the manner of T.V. host Wink Martindale, presented the class with two large magnifying glasses in order that they might better see the varieties a lot easier. He also presented the children with a framed set of Confederate paper money and a framed page from *Coin World* which reported the discovery and confirmation of the 1943/2 Jefferson nickel. Then Romines gave the children copper tokens he himself made as a machine tool and die maker.



Romines produced this bronze token in a manner of hours to commemorate his visit to the fourth grade class at Sewickley, Pa

The tokens proclaimed the fourth grade numismatists as, a "Class of Champions," and contained the date, 1981. In addition, each child received Bright Uncirculated 1960 Large Date and Small Date cents, and a 1968-S Proof nickel, along with the latest copy of *Error and Variety News*, and the "to the class by Mr. Wexler. Mr. Romines also gave the children Buffalo nickels and Uncirculated Wheat Ears reverse cents.

Then, talk about showmanship! Just when it appeared that Mr. Romines was nearing the end of his lecture, paper airplanes came flying from the back of the room. He asked the children who "caught" them to bring them forth, open them, and then read the contents. The first "Bulletin" told all about Bill Fivaz of Dunwoody, Georgia, who has since sent the children a set of color slides on the major Jefferson nickel varieties and to each student an unstruck cent planchet, an off-center cent (which they loved!!!), a 1972 Die number three Doubled Die cent, a clipped Lincoln cent, and *The Error Collector's Handbook*.



"Room of Champions" students are shown holding some of the gifts provided to the class by contributing numismatists. From the left-right, back row are Kim Biondi, Mary Jane Martin, Lisa Le Master, Laura Driscoll and Ann Diederich. In front are Adam Zahorchak, Scott Voltz, Patrick McCombe and Brian Brown.

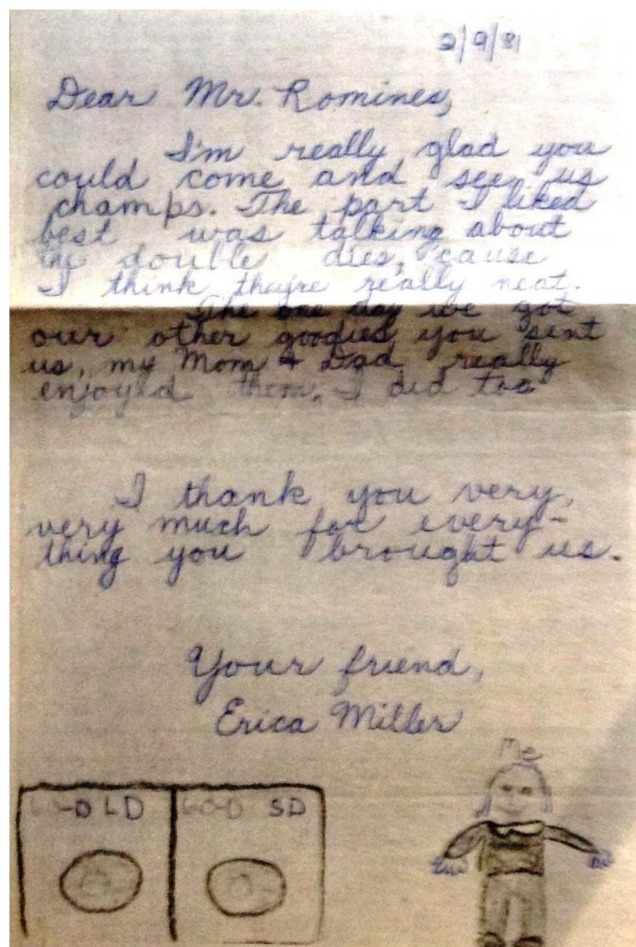
"Bulletin 2" told all about Adolf Weiss, president of the PAK Full Step Nickel Club, who pledged some books for the class's numismatic unit. He was also sending some Uncirculated coins, and hoped to visit the school before the year was out, in order to explain to the children the importance of collecting only the highest quality coins.



Delma K. Romines speaks to Lisa Le Master, to his right, Mary Jane Martin appears to his left, while Emily Riley looks over her shoulder to listen to the discussion.

Continued on page14





Student Erica Miller thanked Del Romines for his visit to her Pennsylvania school, including a self-portrait and diagrams of 1960 Large Date and Small Date cents.

No wonder why we all sat there with our mouths agape! The "Joker's Wild," I thought! No, not Del Romines, but all the wonderful things that were happening to us. Within a period of less than two weeks, we had gained the attention and respect of some of the most renowned people in the hobby. And we seemed to have hit the jackpot! We just couldn't believe that our room was the end of the rainbow, and all of those numismatic goodies were for us.

And finally after promising to come back again, Mr. Romines ended his wee delivered presentation with Bert's words to "Bo" the Hobo. "If you know something you are king. If you are ignorant, you're a bum."

We know two things for sure: (1) We know what it feels like to be winners (even though we still haven't kicked the habit of pinching ourselves), and (2) We know what a champion of education we have in Mr. Romines!

## About the Author

(As it appeared in *Coin World* on March 25, 1981)

Mimi Bizic is a fourth grade teacher at the Edgeworth Elementary School, Quaker Valley School District, in Sewickley, Pennsylvania.

She has been teaching a Numismatic Unit for the last three years, and has been successful in finding local collector friends to supplement the unit with talks on Proof coins, unusual world coins, etc.

Mrs. Bizic is president of the Ambridge Eagles Coin Club, and a member of the Economy Coin Club off Sewickley and the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society of Pittsburgh. She is the third vice president of the Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists, a parent organization to 16 local clubs, and is on the board of directors of the Love Token Society.

She recently spoke to several women's clubs on love tokens and other memorabilia from the Victorian Era. She describes herself as a Romanticist, who would rather hang on to each word uttered by Rhett Butler for the 11<sup>th</sup> time, rather than sit through "Rocky" or "Jaws" for the second.

Mrs. Bizic's husband, Gus, is also a teacher. He teaches an exploratory program in occupational, vocational, and technical trades to Middle School students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Their one son, Nicky, is a collector too. He recently won the prize for the best presentation on Washington and Lincoln coins and currency (for President's Day) from the Economy Coin Club, where he is a junior member. ♦

## Coin Packet Challenges

By Del Romines

The Edgeworth Elementary Fourth Grade Numismatic Unit Sewickley, Pennsylvania read and discussed the story of "Bo the Hobo" (January 21, 1981 *Coin World*) which was written by me. Interest and excitement with the class was so intense that Mrs. Bizic (their teacher) was prompted to call and tell me of the Numismatic Unit, and of the numismatic interest of these nine-11 year old children.

I was so impressed and fascinated by the extreme interest of these children, and (of course) totally elated at their response to the hobo story, that I decided to do something very special for them.

I contemplated assembling individual packets for these young collectors, but had some difficulty in deciding just

Continued on next page



what to send. Then I remembered Mrs. Bizic had told me these children had named themselves "The Room of Champions."

I later learned, after meeting this class, that they truly are champions. Since one can become a champion only by challenging and conquering the difficult, I decided to prepare packets of the most challenging facet of coin collecting — "Varieties and Errors" and full step nickels. A telephone call to Mrs. Bizic confirmed that this was an area of numismatics which neither the class, nor the teacher, had been exposed to, and would be a challenge for her room of champions.

I instantly started assembling packets of information and sorting through errors and varieties, trying to come up with 32 of each error and/or variety coin.

I felt I could not donate different types of coins to these children and possibly have even one feel slighted. The coins had to be basically the same for each child, and this was creating a problem — 32 identical coins were hard to come by.

I contacted two local dealers and had them set aside all Lincoln cent planchets and clips which they had. With these and the ones I already had, I was still short. Two quick phone calls to Bill Fivaz and John Wexler brought wonderful results; both graciously donated the remaining coins to finish these types, plus Mr. Wexler donated 32 off-center struck Lincolns and 32 1972 Die 3, Doubled Die Obverse Lincoln cents for the packets, and 32 copies of *The Error Collectors Handbook*. The package for these young champions was shaping up nicely.

By Wednesday, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>, the package would be totally assembled and ready to mail: perhaps it would be a large valentine package for the children. Then on Friday morning, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, a change of events took place.

My good friend and numismatist, Johnnie Emmett, of the Catoctin Coin Club, Frederick, Maryland, called and told me he and his wife Barb were coming to spend a few days with us, and the idea hit me. I threw the idea at Johnnie — the two of us should personally contact this class on Monday, Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>, hand carrying all the materials which I had assembled so far. Then, we could possibly prepare a lecture for the young numismatists. He agreed and readily volunteered his services.

I made a quick call to Mrs. Bizic at Edgeworth Elementary School for possible school clearance of such a program, especially on such short notice. Mrs. Bizic was ecstatic and being a very persuasive person got the permission needed.

Three more quick calls to John Wexler, Bill Fivaz and Adolf Weiss with information about the trip and lecture, and a request for speedy service on their

pledges. Wexler gave me permission to give each child one copy of his *Error-Variety News*, one copy of his *Encyclopedia of Double Dies - Vol. I* (these materials were at my home), and asked me to tell them he was giving the Numismatic Unit Library a year's subscription of EVN free.

Fivaz instantly assembled his pledged materials and mailed them to me, as well as mailing a set of his major Jefferson variety slides to Mrs. Bizic.

Adolf Weiss started gathering printed material and coins for the students and numismatic books for the Unit's library. The materials could not all be received in time to take with me but were put in follow-up packets which should stimulate high interest in varieties, errors and high quality Jefferson nickel collecting.

Johnnie Emmett arrived at my home around midnight Friday, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, and by 3:00 a.m. Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>, we had ironed out all the details of the trip and lecture. Early Saturday morning the two of us were at the local dealers purchasing the varieties which they were holding for me. Once everything was assembled a call was made to Mrs. Bizic to confirm the lecture dates.

Mrs. Bizic insisted on hosting Johnnie and me Sunday evening before the class on Monday morning. With Sewickley, Pennsylvania being eight hours solid driving from Louisville, we left 9 a.m. Sunday and arrived at the Bizic's at 5 p.m. At one point it was briefly debated whether or not to continue the trip. We had run into a snow storm which dumped five inches of snow, had cut traffic to one lane on Interstate 71 and I79. Speeds were down to 35-40 mph.

We decided that the children were more important, and we pushed on. After all, that is what makes a champion - meeting the challenge and conquering it. We were warmly welcomed at the Bizic's by Mimi Bizic, Gus (her husband), Nicky (son), and Sandy and John (sister and brother-in-law to Mimi). After dinner, coins and collectible subjects were discussed, and finally the fine points of the lecture were laid out for the following morning.

Upon entering the class room, the excitement level was high, both with the children and myself. The greetings alone, which I received from the class, made every inch of that snow worth fighting for. Fears of my not arriving had been expelled as the children expressed their concern for our safety, and some said they had said prayers for our safe arrival. Television video cameras were set up, and excitement could be seen building in this group of very intelligent, well mannered, eager to learn, and thirsty for error and variety knowledge children.

Continued on page 16

It took only a moment to see why they were called “The Room of Champions.” Here I was facing the most eager to learn group I had faced in my 15 years of teaching and instructing. I could see in their eyes that this was the most important endeavor of my life, and I could not let them down.

What I had thought would be about a one hour lecture turned into a very informative three hour conference as the children asked many interesting and intelligent questions. The most fascinating aspect of all to them was the doubled die, although much interest was shown in all areas of numismatics. Besides the error and variety coins and materials, I left with Mrs. Bizic other regular coins to assist them in their regular issues classes. Also, I left a framed set of Confederate paper money to be hung in it class room and framed pages from *Coin World* which reported the discovery and confirmation of the 1943/2 Jefferson nickel overdate. The latter was presented for the hopes inspiration to the young collectors, as I had discovered the t variety of this coin when I was 12 years of age.

Over all, the entire trip was by far, the most exciting and warding venture that I have ever undertaken. This reward did not come by my own doings. None of it would have truly taken place without the unselfish assistance which I received from Bill Fivaz, John Wexler, Adolf Weiss, Johnnie Emmett, Mimi Bizic and all the Quaker Valley School District faculty and staff from the superintendent down.

The hospitality and friendliness (for which Pennsylvania is noted) abounded in this school system, and I will gladly assist them in any way I can in years to come. Knowledge comes through numismatics and sharing. Thank you one and all. ♦

## Some Additional Photos

Courtesy of Mim Bizic



Mim Bizic's Edgeworth Elementary “Class of Champions.”



“Class of Champions” presenting “Bo” cake to Del Romines



Close-up of “Bo” cake created to honor Del Romines.



Laura Driscoll and Erica Miller who wrote thank you letter to Del that was published as part of the *Coin World* article. ♦



## ***“Making” Change***

By Chris Dempsey, LM64

As long as man has created and used coinage and currency, he has been counterfeiting it. The temptation is too great, for some, to copy something of value for personal gain using materials of little value. For modern coinage and currency, it makes sense to use lead, bronze, and other cheap metals to counterfeit coinage. This begs the question; why would anyone counterfeit hobo nickels? The answer(s) to that question is not so clear.



I purchased a double sided carving (reverse pictured at left) from an online auction site in January of 2013, with the suspicion that the reverse carving was the model that the reverse of the counterfeit was taken from. After overlaying the hobo nickel photo over the counterfeit coin (overlay pictured at center), it was obvious that these two reverses were one and the same. The obverse of the hobo nickel I purchased was different than the obverse of the counterfeit (reverse pictured at right). A different carver likely cut the obverse of my coin, and the crudeness of the obverse carving is likely why it does not appear on the token. That brings me back to the question; why would anyone counterfeit a hobo nickel?

There are many possibilities that might answer this question, some more likely than others. One such possibility requires that we note the amount of time it takes to carve a hobo nickel. While a skilled carver might be capable of carving coins in a relatively short amount of time, the average carving likely took hours to create, and that was for just one side of the coin. We know that hobos mostly carved nickels to trade for their various needs, such as a meal or a night's lodging. Now, imagine you are a hobo. What if you could make ten or twenty hobo nickels in the same amount of time that it took to make just one? Moreover, what if you didn't possess the skill to carve one at all, but had access to other hobos that could? You could create a lot of hobo nickels to use for your basic needs simply by casting one, and you could even help your fellow hobos when they were in a bind by doling out a few copies to spend. All one would need is one or two coins to copy and the skill to cast a reasonable facsimile.

Because the government is voracious about tracking down counterfeiters, this is one possible way for a counterfeiting hobo to remain relatively unnoticed. After all, most hobo nickels were saved and passed down, not spent. Counterfeiting an actual coin would certainly attract more attention, since standard circulating coinage was used over and over again.

To my knowledge, this idea has not been fully explored, nor can it be corroborated, but it does offer a very interesting and plausible reason for these counterfeits. It also explains why coins were paired together, such as the counterfeit based off of my coin and another, as of yet unfound obverse carving. In order to successfully pass these counterfeit hobo nickels off as genuine, both sides of the counterfeit would likely need to be as attractive as possible. Since the design of both sides of the coin were altered from the standard buffalo nickel design, I would suggest that the average person would have a more difficult time detecting the fraudulent casting, making it easier to pass off as genuine. ♦



Original Double Sided Carving

Spurious Known Counterfeit

## Introducing “Candyman”

By Chris Dempsey LM64

Not often does a carving come along that I appreciate so much, in my mind it casts a shadow on even my best coins. With that being said, you can imagine how happy I was when I acquired the first example of this coin online in early 2012. Many months passed without a match turning up, either at auction or in the OHNS archives, when Don Wolfe emailed me to tell me that he owned the second match to my coin in his collection. I had already decided on a name for this carver when I purchased my coin, but Don’s coin backed up all of my quick identifiers.

As is often the case with matching a new carver, the third coin often takes a very long time to locate. Thankfully this coin match didn’t take TOO long to find, since Art “Steel Trap” DelFavero remembered he had seen the third match coin a long time ago in Warren Stabler’s collection.

I decided on the name “**Candyman**” because the carving characteristics are very memorable and easily identifiable. Coins by “**Candyman**” exhibit a bow tie candy hat bow, a gumdrop diamond lapel pin, a candy cane hook ear, and sugar speckled bearding/eyebrow.



The carving characteristics for “**Candyman**” are as follows:

- 1) Date and liberty expertly removed and finely smoothed.
- 2) Crosshatched cuts comprise the figure’s coat and coat collar.
- 3) Plain shirt collar stops at jaw line, with no neck visible.
- 4) Gumdrop shaped diamond stickpin with “sparkle cuts.”
- 5) Domed derby with curved brim artfully shaped and smoothed.
- 6) Half “C” shaped ear resembles candy cane hook.
- 7) Speckled beard and eyebrow comprised of tight knit fine punches. Outline of the lips left intact.
- 8) Curved cuts to resemble hair flowing from under derby.
- 9) Finely shaped hat bow resembles Bow Tie Candy atop a crosshatched hatband.
- 10) Small cuts applied above nose to resemble wrinkles.
- 11) Special attention was paid to the finishing work on “**Candyman**” carvings to create an ultra-smooth, nicely finished look.

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## Introducing “Hawk Eye”

By Marc Banks RM538

The first hobo nickel I purchased at the 2012 FUN Show in January was an interesting carving of a hobo with a high domed hat with three vent holes, an angular nose and scraggly beard. I thought it was a bargain at \$75. It is shown on the left. I knew I had seen at least one other example by this carver sold on eBay and after a search on the OHNS web site and assistance from OHNS Archivist Art “Cinco” DelFavero (RM552) two other examples were found. The second specimen (center photo) was purchased on eBay for \$187 by OHNS Member Don Wolfe (RM981) and is pictured on in DeZwerver Dossier #35 on the Original Hobo Nickel web site. The third specimen (right photo) is among a group of coins that appeared on the OHNS site in 2008 under “Classic Carvings going to a San Diego Coin Show” by Owen Covert. All are clearly the work of the same carver who I have named “**Hawk Eye**” after the raptor shaped nose and punched eye found all three examples.

Continued on next page



“Hawk Eye” continued from previous page



The characteristics of carvings by “**Hawk Eye**” include the following:

- 1) A high domed hat with a slightly downturned brim.
- 2) Two or three vent holes on the hat.
- 3) A wide hat band with a bow and vertical lines.
- 4) Punched eye, eyebrow and full beard with dreadlock-like spikes.
- 5) A pronounced bend in the nose and a modified nostril.
- 6) Two examples have no ear. The third has an oval ear low and back on the head.
- 7) The collar forms an upside down V at the front.
- 8) Well-dressed fields.
- 9) All three coins are carved on 1913 Buffalo Nickels.

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## Introducing “Renaissance Man”

By **Don Wolfe** RM981

I had the first coin below (with hole) in my collection when I saw a similar coin in the OHNS Auction #20 (Lot 59). I was fortunate enough to win that coin and then put it next to the one I had. Since the two coins had so many similarities; I put them up as a “Three’s a Match.” Art DelFavero was able to come up with a picture of a third coin which he sent to me. When I received the picture, I looked closely at my two nickels and the picture of the third. To me, the hat on each of these nickels looks like a floppy low-crowned hat worn in the Renaissance period, so I would like to call this artist “**Renaissance Man**.”



The carving characteristics for “**Renaissance Man**” are as follows:

- 1) All coins on a 1913 nickel (at least two are T2) with the date and Liberty remaining.
- 2) Short flat floppy looking hat with appearance of a wraparound brim.
- 3) Field on two have stippling to mask roughness from carving, the third left rough.
- 4) Small carved ear in center of head and center portion of ear removed
- 5) Hair/beard carved and mustache/eyebrows punched with possibly small chisel
- 6) No alterations to profile.
- 7) Two carved lines for collar and a small bit of pushed up metal at lower front of collar.

## Introducing “Devil Beard”

By Chris Dempsey LM64

In May of 2012, the first example of this coin, on a 1916 host coin, came up for sale on eBay and I was the lucky winner for \$230. Before the auction ended, however, I had already matched the coin to the example on a 1914 host coin, which was sold in a previous Heritage multi-coin auction lot.

The third coin, on a 1913 host coin, came the following morning while discussing the match with Art DelFavero over the phone. After locating what I thought was a match from the 1999 OHNS auction, Art tripped over the third coin while searching for a better photo of the coin I was actually looking for. I chose the name “Devil Beard” because all known examples have a beard that comes to a point on the chin, resembling the stereotypical depiction of the Devil’s beard.



The carving characteristics for “**Devil Beard**” are as follows:

- 1) Date and liberty intact.
- 2) Unaltered profile.
- 3) Plain collar that stops at jaw line.
- 4) Short, densely packed curved cuts comprise beard.
- 5) Domed derby with a simple, straight hat brim and ribbon.
- 6) Ribbon is comprised of an open-faced, left facing “V” and three vertical cut lines.
- 7) Ear resembles a backwards question mark with the center hollowed out.
- 8) Carved on early date Indian head nickels.

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## Introducing “Butterfly Bow”

By Chris Dempsey LM64, Art DelFavero RM522 & Stephen Alpert LM10

When the first coin pictured became available, I was able to win it despite significant interest from a few other parties who were also aware that there were other matches for it. The second coin of this carver was found buried in an old Verne Walrafen “Der Zwerver Dossier” from the OHNS website. Lastly, the third coin appeared on the banner from the 2007 Fall BoTales, which Art DelFavero located for me. The main distinguishing characteristic for this carver is the butterfly shaped bow. Having reminded me of a crude butterfly or moth in flight, I originally chose the name “Bug Bow,” however, Steve Alpert’s idea, “**Butterfly Bow**,” seemed to fit much better.



Continued on next page



“**Butterfly Bow**” continued from previous page

The carving characteristics for “**Butterfly Bow**” are as follows:

- 1) Date and liberty left intact.
- 2) Simple rounded derby with flat brim.
- 3) Flying Butterfly shaped bow.
- 4) Straight ribbon with vertical cuts the length of it.
- 5) Small sliver of an ear with a single knife cut for the ear hole.
- 6) Profile is slightly altered in front of the eye.
- 7) Hair and beard are punched with a circle punch.
- 8) A single line outlines where the carver wished the hair and beard to start and stop. Beard and hair were then added to fill in the area.
- 9) Plain neck with no collar.
- 10) Shading is often used with light cut lines near the date and/or behind the head.
- 11) Known carvings appear on early date nickels.

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## Introducing “**Stiff Lip**”

By Chris Dempsey LM64

In November of 2011, I acquired a twenty-coin cache of classic carvings from an old time collector. Among those coins was the first coin pictured here. A few months later, I saw the same collector and asked if he had any other coins for sale from his collection. I bought four or five coins, but the one that stood out the most to me was the second coin pictured here, a beautiful partial cameo carving by the same carver which I was thrilled to purchase.

Nearly eight months passed by with no matches, until late one night while looking for hobo nickel articles via search engine, I came across an online blog offered by David Lawrence Rare Coins. It was in this article that I discovered the third and final match.



The carving characteristics for “**Stiff Lip**” are as follows:

- 1) Date and liberty may be either removed or left intact.
- 2) Derby and jacket are densely punched with a fine tipped tool.
- 3) A simple, stylized mouth, comprised of two angular thin cuts, gives the lips depth and dimension.
- 4) Circle punch used to create bearding.
- 5) Hair detail is likely knife cut.
- 6) Straight brim with parallel ribbon lines.
- 7) Hat bow comprised of a center square adorned with two outward facing, open faced “V”s” turned on their side.
- 8) Half “C” shaped ear with minimal internal stylization.
- 9) Round punched eye.
- 10) Slightly altered profile and nostril.
- 11) This carver uses optional eyebrows, wrinkles, and other small variances in his carvings.
- 12) Carvings, when dated, are carved on early date nickels.

## Introducing “Crooked Nose”

By Chris Dempsey LM64

Of all of the coins I purchased at the Cheektowaga show in October 2012, this coin was the only “standard” hobo carving. There are very few traits that set it apart from other similar carvings. The second photo is from the 1996 OHNS auction, Lot 21, while the last carving was found in the 1999 OHNS auction, Lot 52. A few days later, upon contacting OHNS archivist, Art DeFavero, a fourth example, which is arguably the nicest known example, was found in the OHNS quality designation archives.

I chose the name “**Crooked Nose**” because the alteration in front of the eye gives this particular carver’s carvings a jagged shape to the nose, which is the most identifiable feature.



The carving characteristics for “**Crooked Nose**” are as follows:

1. Date mostly removed, while LIBERTY is primarily left intact.
2. Simple rounded derby is textured using a small round punch.
3. Plain, almost crescent hat brim; no hat band.
4. Standard ear, hollowed out in the center.
5. Beard, hair, and eye are punched with a circle punch.
6. Profile is altered in front of the eye, which creates a crooked nose.
7. Nose and mouth are lightly embellished.
8. Simple collar and coat lapel.

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## Introducing “Hatch”

By Don Wolfe RM981

I bought the first nickel on eBay 2-3 years ago. I was able to buy the second coin from another collector and submitted the two as a “Three’s a Match.” I saw a third coin recently on eBay that was a match for the two coins I already had. After comparing the nickels, I noted several similarities that led me to believe they were done by the same carver. One of the features that all three nickels had in common was the crossed hatched lines on the hat and coat. Because of this, I liked the name “**Hatch**.” I do not have any monetary values on any of the nickels.



Continued on next page



“Hatch” continued from previous page

The characteristics of carvings by “Hatch” include the following:

- 1) Round domed hat with slightly curved brim that appears to wrap around hat.
  - 2) Brim starts about the “L” in LIBERTY.
  - 3) Carved outline of hat and shoulders.
  - 4) Carved hair/beard and smaller lines for eyebrows and hair on neck.
  - 5) Unaltered profile and fields appear smooth.
  - 6) Ear that looks like a large “C” in center of head.
  - 7) Two carved lines for collar.
  - 8) Cross hatched lines on hat and coat.
  - 9) LIBERTY remains on all examples.
  - 10) Date remains on one example; date removed on others.
- 

## Introducing “The Auricle”

By Chris Dempsey LM64 and Art DelFavero RM522

After acquiring the first coin via eBay in August of 2012 for \$220, I quickly found that it was a match to lot #1 in the 2002 OHNS Auction. As I often do when I find a match, I sent out photos to a few friends to see if perhaps they own or had seen a match. In this particular case, OHNS archivist Art DelFavero found the third carving hiding in the Quality Designation archives. After discussing names such as “Huge Ear,” “Lobes,” and “Otto,” Art suggested the name “The Auricle,” which was fitting seeing as the defining characteristic for this carver is the huge ear.



The carving characteristics for “The Auricle” are as follows:

- 1) Liberty is intentionally removed.
- 2) Date sometimes removed arbitrarily when carving coat collar.
- 3) Simple domed derby and hatband.
- 4) Ribbon is comprised of two inward facing sideways “V” cuts with a center square.
- 5) Thick hat brim with a slight upper curve.
- 6) Huge, easily identifiable ear is carefully carved with center cleanly hollowed out.
- 7) Profile slightly altered by a slight notch at the top of the nose.
- 8) Hat brim cut continues through the top of the ear.
- 9) Hair and bearding are comprised of short, densely packed, curved cuts.
- 10) High collar with a triangular fold below the jaw.
- 11) Coat collar has a small short knife cut meant to portray a buttonhole.
- 12) Finishing work is clean and smooth.
- 13) When dated, coins are found on early date nickels.
- 14) There are two ear styles for this carver, a round top ear and a flat top ear.



## Some eBay Sales of Hobo Nickels



"Hook Nose" \$515



Bill Jameson \$154



Unknown \$117



Alex Ostrogradsky \$119



Unknown \$73



Blanca de la Hoz \$91



"Sam Francisco" \$200



Howard Thomas \$305



"Schnozz" \$769



Steve Cox \$155



Unknown \$385



Shane Hunter \$156



Unknown \$135



Marcus Hunt \$154



"Tufty" \$267



Robert Morris \$76



Unknown \$102



Frank Brazzell \$46



Unknown \$165



Aleksey Saburov \$386



Unknown \$104



Bill Jameson Two-side \$160



Unknown \$69



Steve Cox \$153



Unknown \$143



Howard Thomas \$148



"Slick" \$104



Aleksey Saburov \$261



Unknown \$493



## Some eBay & Auction House Sales of Hobo Nickels



Unknown Bowers&Merena \$353



Bill Jameson \$168



Unknown \$36



Alex Ostrogradsky \$234



Unknown \$513



Amy Armstrong \$625



"Schnozz" \$348



Howard Thomas \$710



Unknown \$223



Ben Wells \$76



Unknown \$335



Shane Hunter \$157



"Peanut Ear" \$305



Marcus Hunt \$195



Unknown \$135



Robert Morris \$166



Unknown \$223



Frank Brazzell \$23



Unknown \$112



Pedro Villarrubia \$183



Unknown \$641



Aleksey Saburov two-sided \$571



Unknown \$86



Blanca de la Hoz \$84



Unknown \$310



Paolo Curcio \$350



Unknown \$94



Jay DeBoer two-sided \$179





## Categories for Collecting Hobo Nickels

By Carol Bastable RM576



*Bert Wiegand*



*"Bo" Hughes portrait of Monique*

### Classic Original

#### Portrait:

- Hobo
- Ethnic (Chinese, Jewish, Black)
- Soldier
- Indian
- Clown
- Santa
- Woman

#### Reverse Carved:

- People (Bindlestiff, golfer, mini-man)
- Boxcar
- Animals (Turtle, donkey, etc.)

**Double-sided** (front and back carvings)

**Carving Styles:** Push metal, raised hat brim, cameo

#### Bookplate Carvings

**Signed** (Bo, Bert, Sharpels, & includes edge inscriptions)

#### By Artist:

Collect one of each named artist or multiples of a carver of special interest to collector

**Type coins** (anything other than a Buffalo nickel)

**Dates:** Date set, one of each year in nickel series

#### Related Works:

- Potty Coins (Dime through dollar)
- Satirical carved coins
- Special love tokens (sculpted work or train theme)
- Old tools
- Old postcards

## Modern

#### Portrait:

- Classic themes
- Modern portraits (departure from classic themes:
  - Sailors, Viking, "steampunk", multiple, etc.)
- Women (Howard Thomas has a whole series)
- Front facing portraits

#### People: (figures, not portraits)

- Classic themes of Bindlestiff or Mini-man
- Men: can include cherubs, superheroes, etc.
- Women: can include fairies, mermaids, etc.
- Children
- Multiple figures
- Historical figures
- Cartoon people
- People in Landscapes or with trains
  - (these may contain tiny micro-men)

**Animals:** Domestic, farm, wild, and fantasy

#### Flowers

#### Landscapes

**Trains:** Locomotive, boxcar, and caboose

**Transportation:** Cars, planes, and boats  
(Trains has its own category because of its important ties to hoboes)

**Skeletons:** Obverse and reverse carvings

**Aliens:** Spaceships and Martians

#### Moon & Star

**Geometric & Scrollwork** (includes Celtic & tribal)

**Holidays:** Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, etc.

**X Rated:** Nudes and risqué

**Other:** Items that do not fit the above subjects.

#### Words or Sayings

#### Obverse carved

#### Reverse Carved

**Double-sided** (front and back carvings)

Continued on next page



*Categories for Collecting Hobo Nickels continued*

**Cut-out:** Hobo nickel with a cut-out background.

**Pop-out:** Hobo nickels made to look like pop-out coins or pop-out coins that have been re-engraved with hobo designs.

**Embellished:**

Metal inlay

Set stones

Enamel

Add-on: Added materials going beyond the plane of the coin.

**Tokens:** Miniature and oversized hobo nickel replicas as well as on other tokens and medals.

**Pedigree:** Featured in an article, book, documentary movie, or from an important collection.

**By Artist:** This is a daunting challenge, but try to collect one of each modern engraver.

Or, try going for the top ten carvers. Names might vary depending on who one asks.

Collect only your favorite artist or artists.

**Type Coin Collecting:** Try a 20<sup>th</sup> century type set.

Modern carvers use a variety of host coins, but the Buffalo nickel remains the most favored.

Many carvers will do commissions and a special coin may be requested.

**Date Sets:** Can be completed with the aid of special orders. Varieties and mints could be ignored with simply a date set, making it cost effective.

**Jewelry:** Hobo nickels made and sold in the form of jewelry. A re-carved Buffalo nickel belt buckle would also fall in this category.

These suggestions for collecting and can also be used in organizing a large collection. If one's hobo nickels are stored in 2 x 2 cardboard holders or flips, they can be placed in a "double row" box and dividers can be made for each section. To make a divider, use a 2 x 2 cardboard coin holder and write the heading just above the seam of the holder. Then, use scissors and cut the holder just above where the heading is written. Roughly 1/4 inch to 1/3 inch makes a good header area. The seam of the holder allows it to lay flat when the box is closed. Note: Soft flips are not advised for long term storage as the PVC in them will breakdown on the surface of the coin and can cause damage over time.

Albums are another alternative for storage. There are the press in kind and fancier ones with clear plastic slide out sleeves. There are type set and nickel date books as well as blank nickel books (no date captions). Sets look attractive and organized in these books and are great for viewing but they can also cause some toning of the coins over the long term. Albums are perhaps the easiest way to show off your collection with other hobo nickel friends.

The above categories can be expanded upon over time, but this is a start. Some coins fit into more than one category so the collector will have to decide which the coin represents best when filing it away in a collection. Organization is imperative once a collection gets past a certain size or it is difficult to locate specific coins. Things like quality designation and rarity are to be considered preferences as opposed to categories of collecting. If any of the membership has ideas to add to these categories, please feel free to comment. This is a first go round and it would be easy to have missed something. ♦



*Alex Ostrogradsky hobo at night*



*Howard Thomas cat & the fiddle*



*Ron Landis moon and stars*



*Robert Morris skeleton*



## Some eBay Sales of Hobo Nickels



Unknown \$359



John Carter \$70



Unknown \$164



Keith Pedersen \$146



Unknown \$80



John Schipp \$305



Unknown \$375



John Dorusa \$64



Unknown \$14



Alan Chernomashentsev \$100



Unknown \$258



Aleksey Saburov \$197



Unknown \$60



Howard Thomas \$168



"Knurly Derby" \$114



Paolo Curcio \$292



Unknown \$179



Shane Hunter \$143



Unknown \$61



Amy Armstrong \$148



Unknown \$318



Bill Jameson \$114



Unknown \$147



Jack Press \$59



Unknown \$79



Pedro Villarrubia \$108



Unknown \$279



Jay DeBoer \$88



Unknown \$84



Blanca de la Hoz \$56



## Some eBay Sales of Hobo Nickels



Unknown \$148



Howard Thomas \$298



Unknown \$66



Aleksey Saburov \$298



Unknown \$59



Shane Hunter \$193



Unknown \$73



John Carter \$61



Unknown \$41



M. J. Petitedemange \$67



Unknown \$358



Marcus Hunt \$182



Unknown \$155



Paolo Curcio \$228



Unknown \$76



Carrie Benson \$36



Unknown \$56



Howard Thomas \$373



Unknown \$107



Shaun Hughes \$136



Unknown \$267



Joe Paonessa \$132



"Peanut Ear" \$309



Steve Cox \$172



Unknown \$104



Gedi Palsis \$53



"Stubbles McGee" \$130



Blanca de la Hoz \$83



Unknown \$135



Paul Kelleher \$125



## Member Quests



### Three's A Match

Have you taken a good look at the hobo nickels in your collection? Maybe you hold the third example that matches one of the pairs of nickels on this page. If so, you can collaborate on the nicknaming of said artist. Please contact the editor if you have a match (see page 3 for contact info).

This first pair of hobo nickels was submitted by OHNS member Art DelFavero, RM522. Ears are *similar* to "Peanut Ear," but other characteristics are very different.



This next pair of hobo nickels has been submitted by OHNS member Chris Dempsey, LM64.



This next pair of hobo nickels has also been submitted by OHNS member Chris Dempsey, LM64.



### New members Since *BoTales* 2013 #1

RM-1286	<b>John C. Churchill</b>	PA
RM-1287	<b>Erin Leigh O'Donnell</b>	FL
RM-1288	<b>Ed Montz</b>	PA
RM-1289	<b>Dr. S. J. Speedone</b>	MO
RM-1290	<b>Dan Hovland</b>	WI
RM-1291	<b>Chris DeFlorentis</b>	NV
RM-1292	<b>Maria Warholak</b>	NJ
RM-1293	<b>Kevin Carter</b>	FL
RM-1294	<b>Mark McLaughlin</b>	TX
RM-1295	<b>Pauline Schaefer</b>	FL
RM-1296	<b>Richard Schondelmayer</b>	MI
RM-1297	<b>Ed. E. Mayer</b>	MO
RM-1298	<b>Marvin L. Johnson</b>	OK
RM-1299	<b>C. H. Miller</b>	FL
RM-1300	<b>Jim Chudd</b>	CO
RM-1301	<b>Robert A. Christie</b>	RI
RM-1302	<b>Zachary M. Saucier</b>	RI
RM-1303	<b>Joanne Ried</b>	IA
RM-1304	<b>Aaron Lujan</b>	CA
RM-1305	<b>John Cottone</b>	NY

**Tired Tim**—Ah, it's a cruel heartless world, Jimmy. What d'yer think a woman did the other day when I asked her to give me something to keep body and soul together?

**Jimmy**—Dunno

**Tired Tim**—She gimme a safety-pin.

From the 1938 *Hobo News*

## MONEY TALKS

29 June 2007

by Owen Lorian

Did hobos always do their carving on the Indian side of the nickel?



Most of the time, but not always.



Humph. I'll bet they made me look like a nickel-plated horse.

Well, not quite nickel-plated. More like iron.





## Introducing Carver Shane Hunter

By Ralph Winter, LM37



Every time I meet a new hobo nickel carver for the first time, I'm always amazed at what really nice individuals they are. A recent drive an hour south to Toledo, Ohio was no exception. There I visited with Shane Hunter, OHNS RM1228 (pictured above at his carving desk). Shane is relatively new to hobo carving, having started in November of 2011.

As a young boy, Shane enjoyed whittling objects out of wood. At the age of ten, he began drawing pictures and designs. Over the years he became a tattoo artist and for few years owned his own shop. He also spent about 20 years working in the construction industry.



One of the centennial nickels Shane created

Shane is also a coin collector of U.S. coins. He was searching on eBay one day and came across a hobo nickel. He googled "hobo nickel" and found the OHNS website

and began reading there all about hobo nickels. This was in November of 2011. Being an artist, Shane felt carving hobo nickels was something he might enjoy doing.

Shane is a self-taught nickel carver. He started out with a dremel tool with a just a few bits. He acquired and began using a GRS air graver in September of 2012. He has learned to incorporate engraving into his designs as well. He has made his own hand gravers out of screwdrivers that he can use with a hammer.



Another of Shane's centennial nickel carvings

Shane draws most of his designs in circles he has printed on a piece of paper. He then shrinks them down 50% so they're the size of a nickel and overlays the design on his Indian head nickel canvas. If he's carving a classic style hobo nickel, he does that freehand without the aid of a sketch.



Two recent Shane Hunter hobo nickels

Although self-taught, Shane shared with me that Paolo Curcio and Owen Covert have helped him and answered a lot of his questions. He also mention OHNS member Carol Bastable as being very supportive as he has improved his carving skills over time. Shane goes by the id of forbidden\_tattoo on eBay. Keep up the good work, Shane. ♦



## A Hobo Nickel Excites

By Adam Leech, LM65



Really big news! In February I interviewed a guy who has the COOLEST original hobo nickel. Sorry about the photos, but I only had my phone camera at the time!

He said he remembered his Dad showing it to friends a few times in the 1950's, and that he hadn't thought about it for decades until he heard my interview on KRCC a couple years ago. He thought it was lost until he found it in some things while he was moving recently.

It is a full horn S nickel, not 1913, and is carved absolutely exquisitely. The field is absolutely smooth and the cross hatching detail work is superb. Note the unusual eyelashes! I looked over the nick-named carvers but didn't see anyone I thought was close enough to match.

But here is the real kicker — it has an inscription on the edge! “WITH BEST WISHES TO RAMONA FROM ALEXANDER FEB. 14 1917!”



Thoughts? Does anyone have a similarly inscribed coin? ♦

## Summer FUN Convention

Come join OHNS at Summer FUN Convention being held in Orlando, Florida from July 11-13, 2013. The show will be held at the Orange County Convention Center, 9800 International Drive in **Hall WC**. The convention opens to the public at 10:00 am, July 11th and will run through 5:30 pm July 13th.

If you're interested in hotel information, please go to [www.funtopics.com](http://www.funtopics.com), the Florida United Numismatists website or call 1-800-282-6632 for information. ♦

## Archie & Gedi at Coin Shows

Since the January FUN show, Archie Taylor and Gedi Palsis have setup at several different coin shows in various Florida locations and have represented OHNS. They have been doing carving demonstrations and of course have candy and nickel giveaways for the kids. OHNS thanks them for giving of their time. ♦

